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May 25, 1950

Professor T. Sonneborn
Department of Zoology
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Dear Professor Sonneborn:

Joshua Lederberg of our Genetics Department has asked the University Press to consider the possibility of publishing a volume reprinting a number of papers in microbial genetics. Before we can consider undertaking such a proposal, I must have an indication of interest in the volume sufficient to justify its publication. At Dr. Lederberg's suggestion, therefore, I ask your advice. Your opinions will be of great assistance to us, and we will welcome any comments and suggestions. Please be frank in your judgment of the project; I shall hold anything you say in confidence unless you specify otherwise.

Dr. Lederberg proposes to bring together in one volume original, previously published papers in microbial genetics which would be assigned to graduate students in a course on the subject. In most colleges such papers are available only in single copies in the journals in which they originally appeared; thus they are seldom satisfactorily available to students. Since most of these papers are out of print, there is no way to obtain additional copies.

Although the proposed volume could not include all the readings that every professor might consider desirable, careful selection may make a useful book. We hope that research workers might also consider this gathering convenient, even if they already have most of the articles in their reprint file, and that biology teachers who are not specialists in microbial genetics might welcome a collection of this kind for reference. The proposed volume is not intended as a substitute for a textbook, of which there is none yet available, but it should be a useful adjunct to a text.

The size of the volume will depend on the cost, which in turn will depend largely on the size of the edition, and that can be estimated only in terms of the potential market. It is not now possible, therefore, to prepare a complete list of the titles which

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Professor T. Sonneborn
May 25, 1950
Page 2

would be included. A few authors, however, have been circularized and have given a preliminary consent to be mentioned as contributors. The following list is included here primarily to convey to you the kind of paper which would be included:

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| Beadle | Hershey |
| Burnet | Luria |
| Coulson | Demerec |
| Delbruck | Sonneborn |

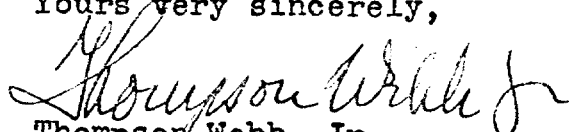
I must emphasize that the list above is only partial; final selection can be made only after the size of the volume is determined. In addition, it is hoped especially to include more papers on fungi.

For obvious reasons, it will not be possible to include review articles. The primary consideration in choosing a title will be the desirability of making its contents available to students and not its being the first report of a discovery. The length of papers and their general availability will also have to be considered. The present plan also calls for a comprehensive bibliography of microbial genetics arranged by subject matter. Dr. Lederberg has indicated that he will be glad to receive any suggestions you may care to make concerning the papers which should be included.

The present plan calls for reproducing these books by offset directly from the original papers. The project would be undertaken by the University of Wisconsin Press as a service to scholars. The contributors would receive no royalties, and the price will be kept as reasonable as possible.

If we are to undertake this project at all, we shall need answers to the questions on the attached page. Your answers to these questions will not be considered as a commitment, but we shall be very grateful to you for any advice that you are willing to give us.

Yours very sincerely,


Thompson Webb, Jr.
Director

TW:gwb

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